

LAST year I nominated General Gruenther as my Man of the Year. Looking over 1956 I choose, perhaps quixotically, a spindly, seventeen-year-old Cockney called Terry Spinks.

Spinks, whose father is a bookmaker, was average at school and, after serving a brief and unspectacular apprenticeship as a stable lad with Marcus Marsh, started earning his living as a van-driver's assistant. He boxed in his spare time.

A few weeks ago, in Melbourne, the cherubic Spinks hammered hooks into the



Gold-medallist Spinks

bluish jawl of a Rumanian student called Mircia Dobrescu and became the first British boxer to win an Olympic gold medal since 1924.

The Killer

This is now boxing history. Less well known is the story of how Spinks triumphed in the Olympics only by a supreme effort of will-power and courage, plus judicious gamesmanship by his teammates.

In a Moscow heat-wave last summer, Spinks was beaten to a standstill by a Russian "Honoured Master of Sport" named Vladimir Stoinikov, and Fate, and the Olympic draw, ordained that Spinks should meet the seifsame killer in the Melbourne quarter-finals.

Spinks was highly perturbed—and showed it. Feverishly his team-mates began a whispering campaign that Stoinikov was overweight, frequenting steam-baths and to be seen wearing an overcoat perspiring away unwanted ounces on the roads of the Olympic village at Heidelberg.

And so to Bed

The desiccated Russian, they chortled, would be in no condition to stand up to Spinks. Gratefully Spinks drank in the intelligence.

The ruse paid off. Stoinikov was out-smarted, out-speeded, out-generated, out-boxed and, finally, out-pointed. A rejuvenated Spinks went on to the final and to more fame than has attended a British amateur boxer since Jimmy Wilde.

They threw a champagne party for Spinks and our other boxing gold medallist, Dick McTaggart, in Melbourne. The ceremony and the stream of fattery did not appeal to Spinks. In the midst of it all our Man of the Year crept off to bed and to the reading of his favourite comics.

No Prizes

To which Man-of-the-Year said these wisecracks been applied?

"He has an infinite capacity for taking planes."
"He flies now; we pay later."
"John, don't just do something; stand there!"
"Dull, Duller, Dullest."

The Quickest Men

MY recent prophecies about the balance of power in 1957 Grand Prix racing have proved correct. Fangio has duly switched to Maserati, and Peter Collins is now to drive number one for Ferrari, with floss leading Vanwall and tawhorn the BRM.
So Collins, last year five

PEOPLE & THINGS: By ATTICUS

points behind Fangio and two behind Moss, has his chance for the world championship. A level-headed young man, he would like to win, but is not worried about it. He says that Fangio is still the greatest driver in the world and he himself is quite happy "getting around and having a happy time."

Collins is the Lothario of British motor-racing; unlike the more ascetic Moss, he smokes and drinks "as much as I want to" and enjoys the impact of his good looks. His requirements for a good driver are, "Impudence, intolerance, sensitivity and the ability to think about other things than motor-racing."

Collins considers the last of these all-important, claiming that he never thinks about racing himself until actually sitting in the car at the start. His only off-track tremors come from watching films of his own driving. "That," he says solemnly, "scares the pants off me."

Incincible

A STRONG flavour of chestnut attaches to this story but it may be new to outlying readers.

Paralysed with nerves, a Parliamentary Secretary rose to answer his first question in the House of Lords. Blindly he read through the prepared answer and straight on through a final note by the Permanent Head of the Ministry: "Not an awfully good argument I'm afraid, but it will do for the Lords."

Out! Damnéd Fog

FOR those who resolve to give up smoking on Tuesday, I am told that this is the most painless and efficient method.

For seven days smoke your usual number of cigarettes, but take trouble to smoke them exactly on the hour, half-hour or quarter-hour regularly throughout the day. Inhale to the maximum and finish each cigarette to the end.

For the following seven days, carry out exactly the same routine. Smoke the same number of cigarettes, at the same intervals through each day, but without inhaling.

In the third week give up smoking altogether, but carry sweets or chewing-gum.

At the end of three months, buy yourself an extravagant present for the full amount your smoking would have cost you.

Subject to a constant flow of sympathy and encouragement from your family and friends, this method is guaranteed and you will be a free man again.

Pastorale

A SAD little postscript to 1956.

The owners of a block of modern flats near Richmond



Lady in a Cage

decided to embellish the site with a statue. This was duly commissioned and created by Mr. Keith Godwin.

The statue, symbolising the Spirit of Home-making was

named "Pastorale" and in September Sir Hugh Casson, unveiling the lady, referred to her "charm and originality."

The local teddy-boys were unimpressed, and made several attempts to rock and roll her off her pedestal.

Now the Spirit of Home-making has had to be enclosed, like some dangerous animal, in a cage of steel and wire.

Ephemera

INCAUTIOUSLY I wrote, some weeks ago that it seemed to be nobody's business to record the passing fashions of each year. A sharp letter from a

reader told me to get on and do the job myself.

So here is some of the thistle-down of 1956 that has blown past one man-in-the-street.

Shocking Blue. Stale electrically chains on cars and toy leopards gazing through the rear window. Beetle-sized cars. "Goodbye for now." "See you later, Alligator. In a while, Crocodile." Rock 'n Roll. Fizza. Cigarettes—cigarette-size cheroots. Tortoiseshell-tinted hair. "The Outsider." Records of "My Fair Lady." "Angry young men." Cossack and Crockett hats. "Stuckmanphol" on the putting green. Vodka. Skiffle Groups. Guitars. All night queues for the Bolshoi.

"A real cool Yule to you, solid cat."

Fable for 1957

IN the good old days of shiny magazines, one publication was running an horrible serial written by a drunken hack who turned in his copy a few hours before press time.

Carruthers, the hero, was in a desperate situation. The villain had got him, bound and gagged, at the bottom of a well. A black mamba was slithering towards him. Poison gas was being pumped into the well. Its steel walls were glowing red-hot and slowly contracting.

After handing in this episode

the author was knocked over by a taxi and killed.

Desperately the editor combed London for another hack to keep the serial running.

He found one and handed him the previous issue.

"But how in heaven's name am I going to get the chap out of this mess?" asked the hack.

"That's up to you."

Seemingly, but to their heartfelt relief, readers were greeted with this opening to the next instalment:

"With one leap, Carruthers was free."



Saturday Review of Literature

"Well, you certainly made a fool of yourself—I can only hope that no one at the party realised you were sober!"

No Boids

BRITISH pigeon-fanciers are scornful at the decision of the United States Army to sell off its carrier - pigeons and return their handlers to ordinary duties. The Pentagon have announced that the birds are baffled by radar and that anyway radios and teleprinters can do their job far better.

It is true that Whitehall has at present no establishment for carrier-pigeons (the colourful rank of Wing Commander I/C Pigeons lapsed with the war). But Mr. Stanley Bishop, Editor of "The Pigeon Racing Gazette," sharply rejects Washington's criticisms.

He has subjected his own racing pigeons to short-wave radio and magnetic fields without affecting their homing abilities, and he makes the neat point that despatches carried by a pigeon cannot be tapped or intercepted by enemy code-breakers.

Phoenix

SIR DONALD BRADMAN, who retired from cricket in 1949, will appear again in Sydney on January 6 in aid of two former team mates—Stan McCabe and Bill O'Reilly.

The Sydney Grade Club, for which Bradman and O'Reilly played, is arranging a One-day game between teams of present and past internationals, and gate money will go to boost the funds of the testimonial match for these two great players.

The game will also serve as a Test trial for the selection of Australia's team for the New Zealand and South African tours next year.

People and Words

"I believe the way in which our Commonwealth is developing represents one of the most hopeful and imaginative experiments in international affairs that the world has ever seen."

—THE QUEEN

"The mark of a Christian is not necessarily the mark of 'Right' or 'Left' but the mark of a man who grasps that his praise or blame of other people's conduct has a corollary, in moral demands upon himself."

—THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

"There is no longer room for doubt about the aims and methods of those who rely on tanks clanking and crashing across frontiers and sewing death in order to force on civilised people a pattern of life that they detest."

—THE POPE